

CLAIMS:

We claim:

1. A track assembly adapted to be mounted in a housing, the track assembly comprising:
 - a first rail member;
 - 5 a second rail member joined and aligned with said first rail member and allowed limited relative longitudinal movement with respect to said first rail member;
 - said joined first and second rail members having a mounting bracket attached to distal ends of said joined rail members;
 - a spring positioned between said joined first and second rail members
 - 10 providing a force extending the distance between said distal ends of said joined rail members; and
 - a locking mechanism interacting with said first and second rail members, said locking mechanism having a locked position resisting inward movement of said distal ends of said joined rail members.
- 15 2. The track assembly of claim 1, wherein each said mounting bracket includes a mounting tab adapted to be received in a mounting slot in the housing.
3. The track assembly of claim 1, wherein said second rail member includes a longitudinal elongated slot and a fastener is inserted through said elongated slot and secured to said first rail member, said fastener and said elongated slot limiting the relative
- 20 longitudinal movement of said rail members with each other.
4. The track assembly of claim 1, wherein said first and second rail members slidably engage each other.
5. The track assembly of claim 4, wherein said first and second rail members are C-shaped in cross-section with said second rail member having a height slightly less than the
- 25 height of said first rail member.

6. The track assembly of claim 1, wherein said locking mechanism comprises:
a catch attached to said second rail member; and
a trigger mounted to said first rail member, wherein in said locked position
said trigger limits inward movement of said second rail member.

5 7. The track assembly of claim 6, wherein said trigger is biased in said locked position.

8. The track assembly of claim 7, wherein said locking mechanism further comprises a spring to bias said trigger in said locked position.

9. The track assembly of claim 6, wherein said trigger includes a rear portion
10 extending beyond said first and second rail members in said locked position, wherein said rear portion is adapted to be manually manipulated to unlock said locking mechanism.

10. The track assembly of claim 1, further comprising a slide assembly mounted to one of said rail members.

11. In a sliding track assembly adapted to be mounted in a rack, the sliding track
15 assembly having a slide assembly mounted to a rail assembly, the improvement comprising the rail assembly having:

first and second rail members joined longitudinally with relative longitudinal movement therebetween, each of said first and second rail members having a mounting bracket attached to a distal end of said rail member; and

20 a locking mechanism interacting with said first and second rail members, said locking mechanism having a locked position limiting inward movement of said rail members.

12. The sliding track assembly of claim 11, wherein said locking mechanism comprises:

a catch attached to one of said rail members;

25 a trigger mounted to the other said rail member,

wherein in said locked position the relative inward movement of said rail members is limited by said trigger engaging said catch.

13. The sliding track assembly of claim 12, wherein said trigger is biased in said locked position.

14. The sliding track assembly of claim 12, wherein said locking mechanism further comprises a spring to bias said trigger in said locked position.

5 15. The sliding track assembly of claim 12, wherein said trigger includes a rear portion extending beyond said first and second rail members in said locked position, wherein said rear portion is adapted to be manually manipulated to unlock said locking mechanism.

16. The sliding track assembly of claim 11, wherein each said mounting bracket includes a mounting tab adapted to be received in a mounting slot in the rack.

10 17. The sliding track assembly of claim 11, further comprising a spring positioned between said joined first and second rail members providing a spring force opposing inward movement between said distal ends of said joined rail members.

15 18. A method of installing a track assembly in a rack or housing, the method comprising the steps of:
compressing the track assembly to reduce the length of the track assembly;
positioning the track assembly between opposing rack members;
releasing the compressed track assembly to securely engage the opposing rack
members; and
20 locking the track assembly in position.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein in said step of locking the track assembly a lock mechanism automatically locks upon the track assembly securely engaging the opposing rack members.

25 20. The method of claim 18, wherein the track assembly includes tabs and the rack members include slots, and said step of releasing the compressed track assembly to securely engage the opposing track members includes the insertion of the tabs in the rack member slots.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein said step of compressing the track assembly involves compressing a spring positioned between first and second members of the track assembly.

5 22. The method of claim 18, further including the step of unlocking a lock mechanism prior to said step of positioning the track assembly between opposing rack members.